

**Brule River State Forest, Douglas County, WI**  
**Master Plan Variance.**  
**May 2012**



**PROPERTY NAME**

Brule River State Forest

**DATE MASTER PLAN WAS APPROVED**

May 2003

**Proposed Change(s) to the Master Plan**

Create two new walk-in camp sites at the Bois Brule Campground that would be located on the plateau that overlooks the river about 600 feet upstream of the canoe landing. Create a parking area that allows space for four vehicles would be located east of the picnic area access road near or at the intersection of the campground access road that serves for sites 5 through 12. The campsites would be accessed by a new walking trail that overlooks the river. A split-rail fence installed along the river side of the trail would guide people down the trail and would discourage foot traffic on the grade leading to the river, therefore controlling erosion from foot traffic, while maintaining river aesthetics. Site placement would allow for visitors to see the river from a panoramic overlook of approximately 18 feet above the water surface. A picnic table, fire ring, and level tent area would be provided for each site.

Approved: Paul DeLong  
Administrator, Division of Forestry

Date: 5/14/12

## **Supporting Information**

### **How the supportive plan change is supported by or inconsistent with the property objectives or prescriptions.**

According to the 2003 Master Plan, the objective is to manage the Bois Brule Campground so it will "provide a rustic and scenic camping and recreational experience that provides sufficient services to maintain a safe and enjoyable experience for users."

Currently, Bois Brule Campground has 20 sites. Three are walk-in sites, and 17 allow the visitor to park within the site. Prior to the current master plan, Bois Brule Campground had 23 sites. The two walk-in sites are located on the river downstream of the canoe landing. These two sites are by far the most highly sought after sites in the campground. For the months of May through September in 2011, the percentage of the days sites 7 and 8 were occupied in comparison to the site occupancy averages in Bois Brule are as follows: May (33.8%/27.6%), June (70%/40.8%), July (80.6%/55.5%), August (56.4%/45.1%), and September (51.6%/37.3%). Visitors enjoy the intimacy of a site along the river. The view enhances their experience.

### **Anticipated benefits of the proposed plan change**

- Visitors would be given added opportunity to view the beauty and tranquility of the river from their campsite.
- It would provide a unique scenic experience unequalled by 18 of the other sites.
- Would maintain river aesthetics at their current level.
- Would provide more campsite revenue.
- Would be easy to create with very little cost of renovation.
- The parking area is set back from the river, and few using the river would be able to see the vehicles.
- Would utilize a pre-existing hiking trail to access the campsites.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

- Increase maintenance costs to property.
- Cost of 200' of split rail fence, fire rings, picnic tables, and minor leveling.
- Because of steep grade, people may be tempted to gain access increasing erosion.
- Since there wouldn't be river access, similar to #7 and #8, visitors may not find it as appealing.
- Up to 4 trees would have to be cut down to create the parking area.
- Parking area would distract from the drive down to the canoe landing.
- Backing out of parking areas would be a hazard to through traffic going to picnic area and canoe landing.

### **Summary of Alternatives considered**

Maintain existing campsites with no additions.

### **COMPATIBILITY WITH STATUTES, CODES, AND DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

The proposed master plan variance is compatible with NR 44.04(a) which reads as follows:

NR 44.04

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(d) "Master plan variance" or "plan variance" means a change in management activity or use described in the master plan that is consistent with the area's land management classification and does not constitute a change in an objective for management or public use of the area as specified in the plan.

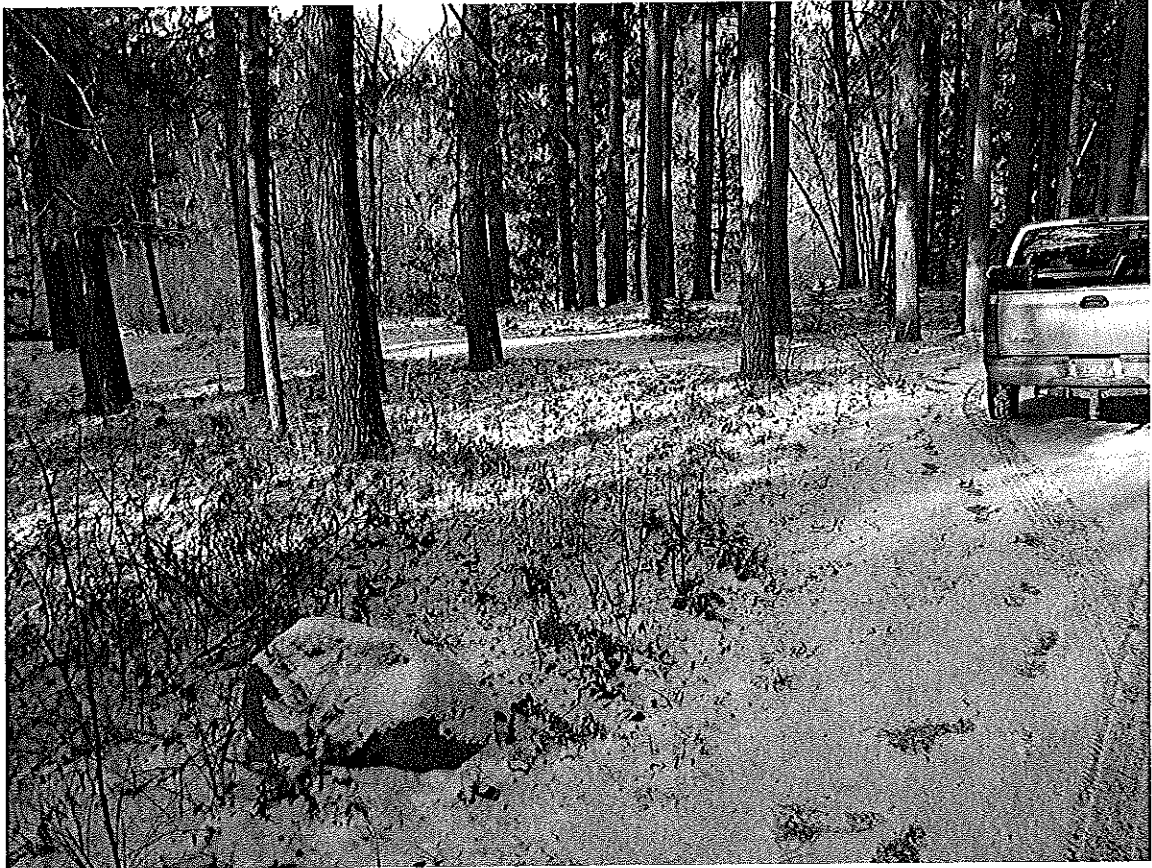
**The Public Review Process Used:**

Information was posted on the Brule River State Forest master plan webpage and presented at the Brule River State Forest public open house meeting on December, 17, 2011

The property superintendent emailed interested and affected stakeholders to inform them of the variance and to solicit comments.

**Description of the Support and/or Opposition to the Proposed Variance (including reasons for the various positions taken) and Any Unresolved Issues or Concerns:**

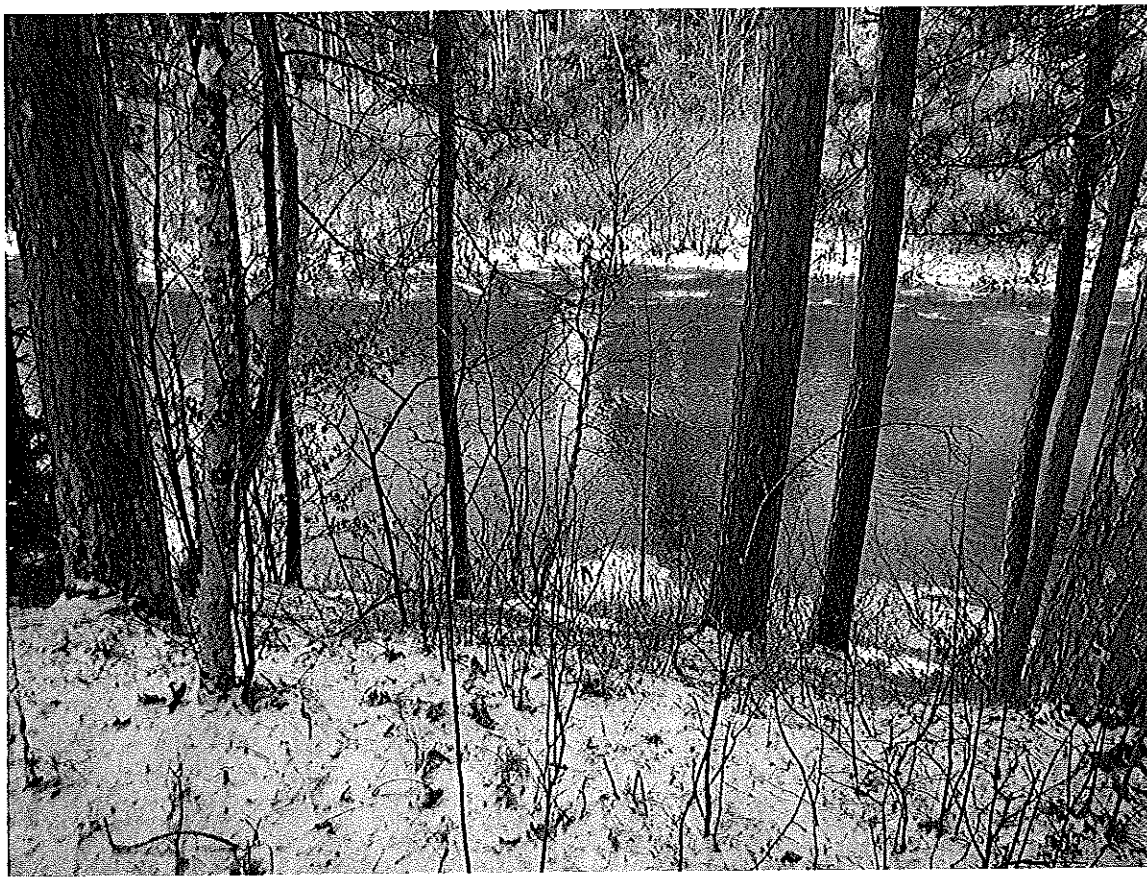
There were no formal comments submitted in support or opposition. Informal comments at the public meeting and with key stakeholders indicate support for the development.



**Proposed parking area location, starting at the rock in the foreground, to front end of the pickup truck.**



**This walking trail already exists. It would give access to the two walk-in campsites.**



**View of the river from about where the first proposed site would be. There is a 15 to 20 foot elevation change from site level to water level.**



**View of the river from the second proposed campsite. Being that there is a steep grade, a split rail fence would be installed for safety and to prevent erosion caused by foot traffic on the hillside.**

